

NAME: MAYEDA, AKICHIYO DATE OF BIRTH: 1902 PLACE OF BIRTH: WAKAYAMA  
Age: 77 Sex: F Marital Status: M Education: JUNIOR HIGH

## PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1920 Age: 17 M.S. \_\_\_\_\_ Port of entry: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation/s: 1. FARMER'S WIFE 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of residence: 1. SACRAMENTO 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Community organizations/activities: \_\_\_\_\_

## EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: FRESNO  
Name of relocation center: TEROME ROHWER  
Dispensation of property: FRIEND'S BARN Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held in camp: 1. NATURAL DUTY 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
Left camp to go to: SEABROOK, NJ, THEN CHICAGO (CREA)

## POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: 1964  
Address/es: 1. SAN MATEO 2. SACRAMENTO  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: CHRISTIAN  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: TAKAHASHI Date: 1/29 Place: SACTO  
TRANSLATOR: M. HALL



Q: Your name is Akichiyo Mayeda. Where did the name Akichiyo come from?

A: My father liked to read books. My older sister died at her birth, then I was born. He wanted me to live for a long time so he named me Akichiyo. Aki (autumn) and Chiyo meaning a thousand years. In those days such long names were popular.

Q: What year were you born?

A: In 1902 on February 1.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Wakayama Prefecture.

Q: Was it a fishing village?

A: No it was farming village. We were near Koyasan.

T: You told me the other day that people from fishing villages are rough.

M: Yes, their speech is rough, and they are hot tempered, so people are afraid to hire them.

Q: What did your father do?

A: My father owned a weaving factory. When I grew up he quit it as my mother did not like it, and became a farmer.



Q: About how many people worked in the factory?

A: I don't know.

Q: Was it a big factory?

A: There were a few sheds where they worked. We hired people to make the basic weave. Then we take them to different weavers and have them weaved. I was the only girl among four brothers so I was spoilt. My mother used to say that the boys are all quiet and mind her, but I am spoilt and don't mind her. I came here in January 1920.

Q: What kind of a man was your father?

A: My father was a teacher of a temple school long time ago. Then he went into business when we were growing up. In those days many people did not know how to read or write, so they gathered them in the temple and taught them. My father was a teacher of the temple school, so there were hakama (pleated skirt) that teachers wore in our house when I was little.

Q: Was your father a strict man?

A: No, he was not strict. My grandmother didn't have a daughter so she loved me, and did not let my parents scold me. That is why I was spoilt. My parents were worried about me as I was too spoilt.



Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: There was no school when she was little, so she just learned sewing before she married my father. When she got married, my father was doing the business, but my mother didn't know how to weigh the skeins. As she was born and raised as a farmer's daughter she did not know such thing. Her father died when she was 14 years old, and her mother had to raise four daughters.

Q: What about your schooling?

A: I graduated from junior high school. My father said, "This girl is spoiled and not bright, so there is no use sending her to a high school. She seems to be good at sewing, so I will let her become a sewing teacher." After I graduated from the junior high school I studied sewing.

Q: Was the grade school 6 years?

A: It was compulsory for 6 years, then junior high was 2 years.

Q: Do you remember about your schooldays?

A: I don't remember well.

Q: What was most interesting?

A: Playing with friends. I did not have a sister, so I liked to bring girls from neighborhood and play. When my relations visited, they used to bring me beautiful material to make obi. I brought little girls home and made aprons and obi for them. My parents were surprised and said I was a fool.



Q: Did you sew since you were young?

A: I was studying to be a sewing teacher. Around that time my husband went to Japan to take a wife. My husband's father came to America when my husband was 2 years old, so my father helped him when he was little. My father liked him as he was gentle, so he made me marry him.

Q: Were you 18 then?

A: I was 17 years and 2 months old. I was still a child going to school. I did not want to come to America, but my parents decided on our marriage without asking me. We were related. My parents decided, and I was sent to America.

Q: Did your parents know your husbands parents?

A: Yes, they knew each other.

Q: How old was your husband when he came to America?

A: I don't know how old he was, but he was young. There were two children; my husband was two years old, and his sister was four. My husband's father came to America leaving 2 children home.

Q: Did you have a wedding in Japan?

A: Yes, we were married in Japan, and then came here.



Q: How did you feel when your parents told you to marry this man?

A: In those days it was popular among young girls to come to America as picture brides. I didn't know America, but I used to see the pictures of America through the viewers. The houses were all nice brick houses, so I thought all the houses were made of bricks. I was surprised when I came to America.

When we arrived in San Francisco my father-in-law brought me a suitcase full of clothes, and my husband and his father dressed me. They put me in a corset which was much longer than the modern ones. I thought it was very uncomfortable. Then they put a dress on me. After that they took me to stores to buy a hat and shoes. When we went to the hat store, a salesgirl was laughing at me. I found out that I had my skirt on backward, so they fixed it for me. Then they brought me to Sacramento.

Q: How long did you stay in Japan after the wedding?

A: At that time there was a regulation that a man who came back to Japan to take a wife could stay there only 20 days. That is why we got married as soon as the arrangement was made, and left there 4 or 5 days after the wedding.

Q: Did you want to come to America?

A: I wanted to come to America because I heard that women do not have to do anything but to sit on chairs and watch men work. It was altogether different when I came here, and I had a hard time.



Q: You left Japan 4 days later. What year was that?

A: It was 1920. We saw the New Year (1920) on the ship. We landed in January of 1920.

Q: How was it when you left Japan?

A: It was good as all my friends saw us off. In those days when someone was going abroad, the whole village saw her off at the station and shouted "Banzai."

Q: Weren't you lonesome?

A: I didn't feel lonesome because I thought America was a nice place after seeing the pictures of beautiful brick houses. I was a child so I didn't have any ideas. When I came here I was surprised. We came from San Francisco to Sacramento, and then took a taxi from Sacramento to our house. My husband was growing strawberry near Perkins. There were 40 to 50 Japanese farmers around there all growing strawberry. Our house was a black house which was like a hog pen. When the taxi turned from a big road to a small street I saw a pretty house painted white with a red painted roof. I thought it was our house, but the taxi went passed it and stopped in front of the little black house. I stayed in the taxi wondering if that was a house for people to live in. Then my husband came and told me to get off. When I got off of the taxi many neighbors came out to see me saying, "The bride is here."



Q: Did you live in that house with your husband and his parents?

A: Yes, my husband and his parents; four of us live there. In those days there were only 2 or 3 families out of about 50 Japanese families who had in-laws living with them. Most of them were just couples who were living free from cares. A spoilt girl like me had to live with in-laws. My father-in-law was a very stubborn and bossy man, so I had a hard time. I had a headache all the time, <sup>every day I</sup> and wanted to commit suicide. I asked my husband to send me back to Japan as I could not live in such a place, but my husband told me to be patient. There was nothing else to do but to die, so for 3 years I tried to find a way to commit suicide. In those days farmers used to draw water from a pit which was about 20 to 30 feet deep by motor. I don't know how many times I stood by the pit to jump inside, but as there was a motor in it I might be injured instead of dying, so I decided not to jump in. Then I thought about getting run over by a train, so I watched the trains go by. <sup>One day</sup> About 2 years after I came here, I walked through the hay which was almost as tall as I was to get to the train track. I thought nobody saw me, but when I <sup>reached</sup> almost the train track my husband saw me and came after me on a bicycle. He caught me and brought me home.

Three years after I got there, a prosperous time came after the World War I and my father-in-law made some profit. My mother-in-law who was a sensible woman thought if her husband stayed there he would make young couple's life miserable, so she took him to Japan. After that everything was all right.



Q: In what way did he give you a hard time?

A: In many ways. I arrived here in January. From around March he hired a few people and started hoeing. Around May the strawberries started coming out. I had to work the same as men. I was still a child, and there wasn't anybody to talk to, so I talked to some hired help. He scolded me saying that I bother other people's work, so if I want to play, go somewhere else and play. He was a boss so he did not work, but he scolded me for talking to the hired help.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: We were growing strawberry, so we started hoeing from March. I had to do the same kind of work as men. When 11 o'clock came I had to take an hour off and come home to cook. In those days there was no gas like today, so I had to make fire in the furnace by burning brush. It was a home-made furnace so it smoked a lot. I had to boil water, cook rice and side-dish for 10 people in one hour so I was busy. as I was not used to it. I cooked with tears, sweat and black face. I did it for 3 years during the busy season in the month of May. By the first part of June we harvested the first crop. Then we let the hired helps go, and just the members of the family picked strawberries which came out little at a time, and sold them. In those days everybody around there lived like that.



A: You were talking about the noodle the other day. Will you tell me about it again.

A: It was a hot day in May so my mother-in-law told me to cook some noodle. I forgot to ask her anything as she was not near me. I just said "o.k." and ran to the house. My father-in-law scolded me because I looked like a child running in a short dress. I came home to cook the noodle, but I didn't know how much to cook. The farmers in the country buy noodle by boxes, so we had a lot. There were ten people, so I thought if I cook 20 bundles, each person can eat 2 bundles so it should be enough. When I started cooking <sup>the noodle</sup> ~~the~~ burned on the bottom no matter how much water I added. I took the burnt noodle out and put it in the bucket and added some more water until the bucket was filled with burnt noodle. I was afraid my father-in-law would scold me, so I decided to feed the noodle to the chicken. I ran to the chicken yard before anybody came home, and dumped the noodle in the yard. The chicken flapped their wings in joy and made a big noise. My father-in-law happened to be taking a break behind the chicken yard, and when he heard the noise he stood up to see what was going on. I was never so surprised in my life than that time. He looked angrily at me <sup>but</sup> didn't say a word. I would have felt better if he said, "Did you burn the noodle?". I felt real bad. I took just the good part of the noodle and served it. I also cooked some rice for people who didn't like noodle.



The hired hands all ate just the rice saying, "We want to eat the noodle, because if we don't, the young bride will be scolded by grandpa, but we cannot eat it as it smells burnt." My father-in-law was an old-fashioned bossy old man. He did not have a watch, so I was afraid sometime he forget the time and I don't have enough time to cook. One time I started to come home without telling him. I was only about 5 minutes early, but he scolded me saying, "It's too early yet!" As I was spoilt, I had a hard time and had a headache everyday. I thought about dying for 3 years. It was good that he went back to Japan, or I would have killed myself by getting run over by a train.

Q: Did you write about those things to Japan?

A: For about half a year after I came here I used to write letters once in a while. Somebody who lived near our house went back to Japan and saw my parents, who told him that they received letters from me saying that I was lonesome. This person told it to my in-laws after he came back to America. I was scolded and was forbidden to write letters to Japan. If I wanted to send letters to Japan, I had to have it censored, so I did not write any more letters as it was too much trouble. Old people were stubborn so I had a hard time, Other people may have been poor, but they just had worry about making a living, and if they worked they could manage to live, but they didn't have worries about being bullied. It was my fault too, as I did not have good sense.



Q: It was a spiritual hardship, but did you have any physical hardship?

A: After we harvested the strawberry the work was not too hard as we did not have hired hands. At grape harvest time I used to go to work at Mr. Umeda's who used to live near our house in Japan. I was glad to go out and worked for about 2 months as I didn't have to see my father-in-law. It was like going on a vacation, and I felt cheerful. Mr. Umeda told jokes. Women cleaned the grapes on the table in the barn, and men brought the grapes from the orchard. I liked to work with many people because it was pleasant. I didn't want to stay home, but I had to bear it with tears. In those days many people had hardship, but not many people knew the hardship with in-laws. My father-in-law was especially hard to please, and I was not smart enough to know how to please him, so I was always scolded.

Q: How old was your father-in-law?

A: He was still young. My mother-in-law was 50 years old, and he was 6 years older than she was, so he was 56 years old. Nowadays that age is still considered young, but he used to say, "If an old man like me can do this, it is not hard for young people like you."

Q: Did you try to get run over by a train once?

A: I thought no one was watching me when I almost reached the railroad track, but my husband must have seen my head over the hay.



Mrs. Wakida's parents came from the neighboring village in Japan, and they were very kind to us. One day when my husband went to their home they gave him a Sunkist orange to give to me. He hid it in his shirt and brought it home. We could not eat it in the daytime as it smelled, so we could not eat it until night time. We were not allowed to talk to each other in the daytime. We ate the orange at night, and my husband went to the hay ranch to throw the rind away.

Q: Couldn't your husband say anything to his parents?

A: They were not like father and son. My father-in-law left his son when he was 2 years old, so he did not have love for his son. My husband was timid, and hesitated to talk back to his father. If he was strong-willed I would not have to suffer so much hardship. We could have walked out of the house if we didn't want to live there, but he was not bold enough to do such thing. He may have been an obedient son, but I think he was foolish.

T: He should have said something.

M: If he had told them that he would leave the house with me, the parents might have acted differently, but he could not say anything to them. He was no good. His father did not love his son as he did not bring him up. Yet he quarrelled with his wife all the time. His mother loved her son, but as the father scolded him all the time they quarrelled over the son constantly. It was a strange family.



Side 2

*First part is missing*

M: His father came to America alone, and did not send any money home for about 3 years. At that time my father helped my husband's family as they were relations. My father liked my husband as he was a kind-hearted boy, so he gave me away to him. As I was a spoilt girl he must have thought that he would make a good husband. I don't know how many times I cried and fussed wanting to go back to Japan, but nothing was done, so I thought there was nothing else to do but to die. I think nobody else had such hardship as I did in those days. Everybody was poor, but they lived free from cares. Not many people owned their homes. A young couple came to work for us at one time carrying blankets which were their only belongings. They said, "It is good that you have a house even though you have your parents." I said, "I don't want a house which is like a hog pen."

Q: Have you ever talked back to your father-in-law?

A: I was scolded all the time, but I never talked back.

Q: Were you very happy when your inlaws went home?

A: I was relieved. Things were not so good in those days so we barely made a living. A little after the inlaws went home our son was born. It was the third year after we got married. We were leasing the land, but when the lease was up we had to move out. As the boy started going to school it was not good to move



so we decided to buy land. We bought 20 acres of land in Elk Grove near our son's school, and planted strawberry, grape, plum and other fruits. I think we bought the land in 1929. Eleven or twelve years later when we started getting good crop, the war broke out, and we had to go to camp without changing our clothes carrying only what we could in our hands. At that time our son was almost ready to finish high school, and our daughter was only 6 years old.

Q: Did you do well after your inlaws went back to Japan?

A: Yes, my inlaws made us work, but they didn't work.

Q: So, it was the same when the inlaws were here or not, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was the same, except that I was not scolded.

Q: Did the family life become more comfortable since then?

A: Yes. We bought land, so we needed money to cultivate the land.

We managed to make a living, but didn't have money to put in the bank. We were supposed to pay off the mortgage in about 15 years, and when we left for camp we had we had 2 or 3 years left to pay. My husband said that the old landlady will not have us to pay the rent after we leave and she may be pressed for money. He went to WRA and had a paper made and signed it so that she could sell the land when she wanted to. If we had paid off the mortgage we could have sold the land, but we couldn't as we had 2 or 3 years left to pay. WRA people told my husband he didn't have to worry about her, but he felt sorry for her. We received the compensation about 8 years after the war ended.



Q: Did you return the land which was almost paid off?

A: Yes. Later we put in for the compensation and received it. I think it was good that the war broke out. Because of the war we could work in Chicago and other places, so it was good for the children. If there had been no war we would have stayed there managing the 20-acre ranch, and Bill may have become a small farmer succeeding his father's ranch. I think he is better off now. After getting out from the camp Bill went into the Army, and attended a language school. When he graduated from the school the war was over, and he was sent to Japan to work as an interpreter for a year. When the year was up, he was offered a large amount of money to work another year, but he wanted to come home and go to school. He wrote and asked me what to do, so I told him it was up to him. He came home and went to Chicago to attend an electronic school.

Q: How long did you stay in Elk Grove?

A: In 1929 we bought 20 acres of land and built a house on it. The house was small with a boy's quarter and did not cost much, but a good motor cost \$800. In olden days we dug a pit, and put a motor in it, but by that time there were good machines, and we did not have to dig a pit. It cost \$1,000 to drill a well and put the motor.



Q: How long did you stay in Perkins?

A: We stayed there only while his parents were there. Then we leased a new ranch. Three people from Wakayama prefecture as partners leased 80 acres and managed it until we bought the land.

Q: What did you plant there?

A: We raised strawberries. We ~~also~~ raised grape for the landlord, so we did not have to pay the rent. for 3 or 4 years.

Q: Did you have to move after 3 or 4 years?

A: We had to leave if we run out of space to plant, but as we had 80 acres, we cultivated about 5 acres at a time, and increased the area gradually. We stayed there for quite some time.

Q: Did you have to ~~red~~claim the waste land?

A: We had to level and cultivate the land. In excahnge we did not have to pay the rent. We had to pay for building the house and installing the motor fpr the well. The landlord rent us the land free for growing grapes for him.

Q: What do you remember about those days?

A: My son was born there. That year<sup>1</sup>the business was not good. We hired 7 or 8 people to harvest strawberry, but after we shipped the strawberry out we did not receive any money as strawberries were spoilt in the freight train. We did not receive any money, and yet we had to pay our helpers. We were not the only one, everybody had a hard time that year.



Q: Did everything go well when you managed 80 acres?

A: Mr. Sasano, Mr. Nojiri and my husband worked together as partners. We were all poor farmers. Mr. Nojiri had 12 children, and Mr. Sasano had 8. We were the youngest, so we had only one son at that time. We barely made a living. We made some money, but as we did not have any income one year, we did not have any money left.

Q: Did your inlaws leave you anything when they left?

A: They left only the land and nothing else.

Q: Did they leave you any money?

A: I remember that they gave us only \$100, and said that if we work hard we will have enough money to live on. I think they left in February, so we had to live on \$100 until we started getting money from strawberries. In those days there were several strawberry growers' associations, and we used to belong to Nojiri Co., so my husband went there to borrow some money. As they knew him as an honest man they were glad to lend him money. He asked for a small loan, and they asked him if that was enough. We managed to live, but we did not have any money left.

Q: When you were with inlaws, did you just work?

A: Yes, we worked, and they just fed us.



Q: Didn't you go to town?

A: Once a year on 4th of July they let us go to Sacramento. They gave us \$10 spending money. We didn't have a car, so we spent much money on taxi. Once a year we went to see the fireworks at the Southside Park on taxi. Looking back upon those days I think we were pitiful. I don't know how we put up with them. Rest of the year we just worked. It was better at harvest time as we hired people, and I could talk to them even though I got scolded. The rest of the time strawberries came out little at a time during the summer, so we picked strawberries and made some money. We were just fed and clothed for 3 years. As all of us worked, the inlaws could save money and go back to Japan. I am glad they went back to Japan early. If they had stayed here longer, I would have killed myself. All kinds of things happened.

Q: When you bought the land did you buy it in your son's name?

A: Yes, in his name with parents as guardians.

Q: Did you grow strawberry after you moved to Elk Grove?

A: Yes, we grew strawberry first, and then grape in between about 6 feet apart. We could harvest strawberry for 3 years. During that time the grape grow, and on the 4th year it bears fruit. We had plum and other fruits. They were all grown up and ready to bear fruits when we went to camp. As we did not finished the payment we could not sell the ranch. We made arrangement with WRA so that the landlady could sell the land.



Q: Did she sell the land?

A: I don't know what she did. We stayed in camp for 3 years and then we went to Seabrook, New Jersey after the war ended, and worked in a cannery for 3 years. After that we went to Chicago.

Q: Did you live in Elk Grove for about ten years?

A: We lived there for about 12 years; from 1929 till 1942. In those days George Matsumoto's ranch was adjacent to ours.

Q: Did everything go well in Elk Grove?

A: Yes. There was a Japanese language school where our children attended, and there was a high school near by. Bill was supposed to graduate from high school in June, but we went to camp on May 28. After we went to camp Bill had his high school graduation.

Q: Were you in Elk Grove when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: Yes. My son was playing with Matsumoto's children when he heard the radio and shouted, "Mama! The war broke out. They are fighting."

Q: Were you surprised?

A: I was surprised. We were always worried what will happen if the war broke out. A little later we heard that we have to go to camp, and we <sup>were</sup> restricted to travel only 3 miles. At that time Yamanaka came back from the Army. He was in uniform, so he used to take me to Sacramento for shopping. I did not feel at ease.



Q: Were you afraid Japanese would be persecuted?

A: Yes, we were worried how Japanese would be treated. There was a rumor that all the Japanese <sup>were to be</sup> put in camps and killed by dynamites. Therefore we dried some steamed rice and took them to the camp in case we had to escape. We could not take much, so we just put some change of clothes in bags and let our 6-year-old daughter carry one, too. When we went to camp it was not as bad as we thought.

Q: When you left home did you leave much behind.

A: We stored all the kitchen tools, dishes and all the household goods in Mr. Sugimoto's barn and locked it up.

Q: Was everything there when you came back?

A: Nothing was left. People who left camp early took them home. Sugimoto's daughter told me that Taniguchi-san took all my New Year's dish, Bill's good bed, tables and everything good to their home. They did not say anything to me when I saw them later.

Q: Were they there until you came back?

A: No, until those people came back. We went to Seabrook and Chicago so we did not come back to California till later.

Q: Did Sugimotos come back early?

A: They came back two or three years earlier than we did.



Q: How did you feel when you left for the assembly center?

A: We had to wear tags as if we were luggages, and carried suitcases. Everybody had to do that.

Q: Where was the assembly center?

A: It was the stable in Fresno. It was May 28. We had to leave the strawberry which were ripened after a years hardwork. I think the white people in the neighborhood picked them and made jam.

Q: Until how many days before you left for the assembly center did you work?

A: I think we worked till the day before we left, because the ranch was red with strawberry. We went to camp when the strawberry were ripe after a year's hard work.

Q: How was the assmebly canter?

A: It was good, and we had fun, but it was very hot. Fresno was much hotter than Sacramento. It was so hot that we walked with Army blankets over our heads in the daytime. We stayed there till September, and then went to Jerome, Arkansas.

Q: Was it inconvenient in the assembly center?

A: No, nothing especially. We had plenty of food, but we had to line up for food as beggers. I wanted to go to school and learn English, so I went to the canteen and bought some pencils and a tablet. An



old man in my neighborhood asked me what I bought and what I was going to do with them, so I told him that I bought pencils to go to school. He said, "That's foolish. If Japan wins the war, Japanese language will become an international language, so we don't need English. Those who study English are fools." Then I decided not to go to school. I wished I had started studying English then and continued in camp. Before I left the camp I went to school for a little while. We had all kinds of fun in the camp.

Q: The assembly center in Fresno was a stable before, wasn't it?  
Did it smell bad?

A: It was all cleaned up, and Army cots were placed side by side for us to sleep on. We had fun. Sometimes we got together <sup>and</sup> some people entertained us by singing songs.

Q: Did you have that in Fresno, also.

A: Yes. We did. Some people who could sing entertained us.

Q: What did you do in Fresno as your hobby?

A: I did not do anything special in Fresno. I just visited around.

Q: Did anything happen in Fresno?

A: There was a rumor that somebody saw a ghost with one body and four legs in the toilet.



Q: Were you worried about your children?

A: No, I wasn't worried about them much. My daughter was too little, and my son helped transport food by driving trucks.

Q: How did you wash clothes?

A: There was a laundry room. The bath was ready from the morning, so we used to say that we are like millionaires taking baths in the morning. Those places were well equipped.

Q: Was it hot in the house?

A: It was very hot, and sometimes it got up to 120 degrees. I thought Sacramento was hot, but it was much hotter there.

Q: Was it hot in the house, too?

A: Yes, but it was not as hot as outside, so we stayed home in the daytime, and went outside when it became cooler in the evening. We had many friends so it was lively. It was much better than what we expected before we went there.

Q: Where did you go from there?

A: We went to Jerome in September when the camp was completed. There were rumors that the mosquitos in Jerome were as big as sparrows, and if they come in swarm they can stop the trains. We were affraid, but when we got there we found out that there were many mosquitoes, but they were not so big. There were many



poisonous snakes. Single old men used to go to the hills, catch them and keep them in boxes they made out of sticks, and put them by the door. They had fun doing such thing. My husband helped children play baseball. It was very lively. After we went to Jerome we were settled as we thought we might have to stay there for a long time, so everybody learned something. I attended a sewing class and a flower arrangement class.

Q: Did you work in Jerome?

A: Yes, my husband worked as a carpenter's helper and received \$16 as salary. I worked early in the morning with a woman next door picking up sanitary napkins from toilets within 3 or 4 blocks, and received \$16. We were fed, and we did not go anywhere, so we did not need the money. Food was good in Jerome. Shrimps were caught near there, so we had shrimps often. I heard that food was better there than other camps.

Side 3

Q: How was the life in camp compared to life in Elk Grove?

A: It was not as bad as we expected. We were young then, so we were not too tired to go out and play. We did not have worries about eating, and if we wanted to, we could take baths in the morning like millionaires. We took dried steamed rice with us in case we had to escape, but there were no such worries.



Q: Were there anything inconvenient or things you didn't like?

A: There wasn't anything especially inconvenient. When many old Japanese get together they like to gossip. I didn't like to hear them. Sometimes they gave us Sears order book to order some clothes. They were not too good; remnants which were too big in sizes.

Q: Were you questioned about loyalty?

A: Yes. A little while after we went to the camp we were divided into two groups. If we were on American side we were hated as unpatriotic viper. Those who volunteered to go back to Japan were haughty, and they used to get together in ladies' room and talked. When we went there we had to slink away, so we didn't like to go there. We used to ask if there were anybody in the ladies' room before we went there. There were many such people in Jerome, and they spoke against people who wanted to stay in America. They were sent to Tule Lake.

Q: Were you "Yes" "Yes" or "NO" "No"?

A: We were "Yes" "Yes". Our son wanted to go out. It was obvious that he would be inducted in the service if he went outside, but he said that was all right with him because he didn't have to go to Japan then.



Q: Did you decide to settle down in America from the beginning?

A: Yes, we decided to reside in America permanently, and did not think about going back to Japan. The group of people going back to Japan were high-spirited when we saw them off. They said that if they take proceedings they would receive a lot of money when they arrive in Japan, so much for each child. That is why many people especially those who had many children took proceedings to go to Japan. In those days the camp was divided into 2 groups, and they were high-spirited and spoke ill about those who stayed, so <sup>we</sup> humbled ourselves.

I heard they had a hard time in Japan. They thought they would be welcomed in Japan, but instead they were asked why they went there when there were not enough food. My son who was stationed in Japan as an interpreter at that time told me that many Japanese came to barracks looking for food in garbage cans, or picking up cigarette butts.

Q: What are other things you remember about Jerome?

A: After they left, there were not many people left in Jerome, so we were transferred to Roah. <sup>ROAH</sup>

Q: How was Roah?

A: It was good, too. People left over from different camps gathered there. We stayed there for about a year.

Q: Did you stay in Jerome for a year?

A: We stayed there for about 2 years, so we spent altogether 3 years. We had fun there.



Q: What kind of fun?

A: They showed us plays. We were young then, so we were not too tired to go anywhere. Sometimes they let us go out shopping. I went to a sewing class and English class in Roah before we left the camp. I was busy going to classes for about half a day.

Q: How was that kind of life compared to life in Elk Grove?

A: We had more fun in camps. We didn't have to worry about making a living. We worked and recieved \$16 for spending money. When we were in Elk Grove we had responsibilities, so we could not have any luxury. When we bought the land and cultivated it we did not have any money left. We did not have any money when we went to camp. People who had many children in Elk Grove had hard times, so they were better off being fed and had their children brought up in camp. I wanted to die, but I survived, and experienced many things in my life.

Q: What was the difference between Roah and Jerome?

A: Not much difference. They were almost the same.

Q: How did you decide to go to Seabrook?

A: When the war was over, the officials of the camp thought about a way to get Japanese out of the camp. They sent 3 or 4 young men to Seabrook as trial. They were all good young men, so the company liked them and wanted many Japanese to come and work there.



People who wanted to work there made arrangements to go there.

As our son had left the camp earlier, and we had only one daughter it was easy for us to move, so we left the camp with a group of people for Seabrook. The day we arrived in Seabrook the town was noisy with people celebrating the victory with parades and pulling tin cans behind their cars.

Q: How did you feel when you found out that Japan lost the war?

A: We said, "We thought we will win the war, but we lost it. It couldn't be helped."

Q: Did you think Japan will lose the war?

A: We had a doubt, if Japan could win the war, but we wished Japan would win.

Q: Did you think America will win the war?

A: There were people in the camp who had short-wave radios, and they listened to them in the closets. They told us that Japan was winning the war, so I wondered if Japan was going to win.

Q: What kind of work did you do in Seabrook?

A: It was a factory to make food for the military services. Most of them were canned food and frozen food such as peas, beans, asparagus and other vegetables. Many people sat facing each other on the assembly line, and sorted out the vegetables as they came down on the conveyor belt. When they were sorted out, they were put in small cartons to be frozen. Everything is done by machine.



When we worked at night time we had to sleep in the daytime, but we couldn't sleep in the daytime as it was noisy. That is why we quit there and went to Chicago.

Q: Did you change shifts every two weeks?

A: Yes, every two weeks. The machines were in operation all night long.

Q: How long did you stay at Seabrook?

A: We stayed there for 3 years.

Q: Did you have fun at Seabrook?

A: We ~~just worked~~ there. We worked from early in the morning, but we were still healthy. We did not have to worry about looking for a job. We did not work during the winter time for 2 to 3 months, but we recieved unemployment money, so we had enough to live on.

Q: Did you go sight-seeing?

A: Seabrook was close to Washington, so we went to see the cherry blossoms and <sup>went</sup> sight-seeing in New York by bus and had fun. When we were working in the daytime and slept at night it was all right, but as I could not sleep in the daytime, it was hard for me to work at night. We were afraid I might become ill, so we moved to Chicago.



Q: Why did you decide to go to Chicago?

A: We went there because we heard that some of our friends went to Chicago and got good jobs. Around the time we went to Chicago it was after the war and the business was dull. About 2 or 3 weeks after we got the jobs we were told that they had to cut down on the personnel. As we were newcomers we were the first one to be cut down. We were fired everywhere we went to. Finally about 2 years later I got a job at RCA Company and worked there for 15 years. My husband worked at a wholesale house of books and household goods. His salary was much less than mine.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I tested the tubes made in Wisconsin and put the labels of the companies on them. The tubes were made at one place, but those that go to G.E. had to be tested 100% while the tubes that go to other companies were tested only about 10% (10 to 12 from a box of 100)

Q: What did you do after you tested the tubes?

A: I put the names of the companies which ordered the tubes.

Q: Were the tubes which had the G.E. label different from the ones with other labels by the fact that they were tested 100%?

A: There were differences in price although the tubes were made at the same place. There were small tubes, big tubes and even tubes for aeroplanes.

Q: Did you do that kind of work for 15 years?

A: Yes.



Q: Were you the only Japanese?

A: No, there were about 10 of us.

Q: Among how many?

A: There were altogether about 3,000 people working there, and men did shipping and other work. There were about 100 people who tested the tubes and put labels on. They were mostly Italians and Mexicans. There were no black employees in those days. I think they hire black people now because of the equal rights. They treated Japanese well, and the boss and the foreman were especially kind to me.

Q: How did you find that job?

A: My daughter-in-law's mother used to work there. She said she would take me there as we needed some connection to get a job there. I used to work at a book company with Mrs. Kurosaka who came from a good family but never worked before. She was older than I, but as she could not do a good job people made fun of her. I felt sorry for her and told her that I would look for another job for her and myself. I heard from my daughter-in-law's mother that they were going to hire some people there. If I asked my daughter-in-law's mother she would have taken us there, but I didn't want her to be blamed for introducing someone who could not do a good job, so two of us went there to see if we could get jobs. They told us that they were looking for someone of my age. The other lady was a bit older but they will try her with me. That is how we both got the jobs and started working there.



I don't know why but the boss liked me and took good care of me. This lady was not a good worker but I helped her. About 3 years later she retired. She was very grateful for me saying, "Because of you I can get the top in the Social Security." She is retired and lives in Seattle now.

Q: What is her name?

A: Mrs. Kurosaka. She came from a good family, so she could not work. I was lucky I had a good job. There is a proverb, "He who gives to the poor, lends to the Lord". I felt sorry for this lady and took her there and I got a good job.

Q: Was it fun to work there?

A: It was good. There were no Japanese employees there before we were hired. About 7 or 8 Japanese were hired, but we all worked hard so they liked us and treated us well.

Q: Did you make any mistakes?

A: No, nothing special. The work was easy, just test the tubes and put the names of the company. We matched the numbers on the papers. We tested every tube that was going to a good company, but we tested only 10 or 12 out of 100 tubes going to other companies. There were orders of 100s and 1,000s from many companies. Japanese were liked for good work, and I worked 15 years.



Q: What did your husband do at that time?

A: He worked at a wholesale house. It was a large wholesale store which had about 3,000 employees. My husband's job was to pack the merchandise that were ordered. They sold all kinds of things. His salary was less than mine.

Q: Did you work for R.U.A. for 15 years?

A: When I reached 10 years I received a gold pin and a letter. the boss congratulated me and said, "It seems like yesterday that you came here, but 10 years have gone already." When I retired after 15 years they gave me a big party, and the bosses attended.

Q: When did you retire?

A: In 1964.

Q: Did your husband work till then?

A: Yes, he retired a couple years before I retired. He did not do anything for about half a year, but he found another job and worked until I retired because it was harder for him to go shopping and cook supper than going to work. Both of us retired in 1964 and then went to Japan and visited for half a year. We had left our household goods to two families in Chicago thinking we would go back to Chicago. But when we came back to San Mateo, my children told us to stay in California where the weather is warm, because we will freeze to death in Chicago. So we decided to stay here.



Q: Did you stay in San Mateo?

A: We stayed there for 5 to 6 years, from '65 to '71. We came here in September '71. Seems like yesterday that I came here, but it has been almost 10 years. Time sure flies.

Q: Going back in your past, how was the trip from Japan?

A: I got on board the Tenyo-Maru from Kobe, and I did not eat anything but just drank water until we arrived Hawaii because I was seasick. My legs were unsteady as I didn't eat for 9 days, so at one time I fell down in the toilet and tumbled down as the toilet was at a high place. Influenza broke out on the ship and two people died on the ship. Because of it, we did not have to go to the Immigration office, but landed immediately with the first class passengers. When we arrived at the port many grooms were waiting. The brides would shout from the ship, "Will so-and-so from such-and-such prefecture please raise your hand or take off your hat!" At the end everybody raised their hands or took their hats off to tease the brides. In those days girls were quiet and gentle, so they hid the pictures in their pockets and just peaked at them. I was with my husband, so I asked them to show me the pictures. When we arrived in Hawaii my husband took me to a Chinese restaurant. It was good, and since then I started eating on the ship.



Side 4

Q: When were you baptized?

A: We were both baptised on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1952.

Q: What church were you baptized at?

A: At Woodlawn Church in Chicago.

Q: Did you have any connection with Christian church before then?

A: No, we were Koyasan Sect. Koyasan was no too far from where we lived, so everybody belonged to Koyasan. A man who used to work with my husband took him to church a few times, and he came to like the church. The day before Easter he told me that he was going to be baptized the next day and become a Christian. He didn't tell me about it till the day before, because he was afraid that if he had told me before I might have raised objection, and he did not like to argue. Next morning I decided to be baptized with him. When the pastor came I told him that I want to be baptized with him, but I don't know anything about Christianity. The pastor told me that it is all right, I will understand it in due time.

Q: Was Japan changed when you went back in 1964?

A: Yes. I left there in 1920, so I didn't see Japan for over 40 years. Tokyo was so crowded that we had to hold on to something that looks like an umbrella to cross the street. That is why I didn't have a good impression.



Q: How was the country?

A: It was not chaged much. While we were in Tokyo we were taken to hot springs and many interesting places, so I thought Tokyo was better. While we were in the native country we visited Koyasan and Shirahama spring. We spent about half a year sight-seeing.

Q: I hear that your daughter's father-in-law is a very interesting person. Please tell me about him.

M: I want to talk about him. There is no finer man than he is.

Q: What is his name?

A: His name is Ureshino Tomisaku. Even his name is good. [Literally it means Happy field, make wealth) He came to America when he was around 16 as a student. He worked as a waterboy for a railroad for a while. Then he went to Miami and worked as a schoolboy at a millionaire's home. When his master died he inherited \$10,000. In those days Japanese used to go back to Japan when they made \$1,000, so he decided to return to Japan. When he was going to see a friend, his car was hit by a car driven by a white man with his wife and a small son, 5 or 6 years old. This boy suffered a broken leg, and his father sued him. At the trial the boy testified that the accident was his father's fault, so my uncle was found not guilty. He felt sorry for the boy with broken legs, so he gave \$10,000 to the boy so that he can be taken care of all his life.



Now he didn't have money to go back to Japan, so he idled his time away without going to school. Then another millionaire asked him to come to his house. He worked at this man's house until he graduated from college. This millionaire said he would give him hundreds of acres of land in Miami, but he refused it saying he would rather have a small amount of money instead. If he had taken the land which is in the best part of Miami now, he would have been the richest man in Miami now.

Then he loafed around again, but another man came to help him. This man told him that he would lay out the capital if my uncle would open a restaurant. He opened a restaurant and managed it for many years. Then the depression came and many people could not pay for the food. He made big pots of stew and gave free meals to those who could not pay. He continued it for a long time. When we went there the business was booming. People were lined up in two lines to take out food. Every day they cleaned about 2.00 pounds of shrimps, boiled them a little and made Tempura. With the stock they got from boiling shrimps they cooked rice, and made fried rice. People came to buy and take home the Tempura and fried rice.

In those days my uncle went to a camp to recruit some Japanese to work in his restaurant. My son-in-law, Terry's mother who was a widow went to work there taking her son with her. Later she married my uncle. He made a lot of money



but spend a lot by giving free meals to poor people. After he was married his wife helped him save money, and they saved a lot. He used to spend a lot of money on horserace, but after he was married his wife made a rule that each person spends \$1,000 a year on horserace, and after he spent it he couldn't go any more. That is how they saved money. My son-in-law is lucky to have such a nice father. He is like a millionaire as he inherited money and property from here and there. On top of that he made a lot on money from the restaurant.

He retired from the restaurant business after 17 years. He stayed there for 5 years after my daughter married Terry. He used to spend half a year in Japan and half a year in Miami because he thought the inlaws should not live with the bride all the time. Every time he went to Japan he bought a lot of cheap land, but the price of land has gone up in Japan.

He died 7 years ago in May, but his widow still lives in Japan. My daughter and her husband visit her every year in May to show their children and get some money from her. She has nieces and nephews, but I think she wants to give money to her son, so she calls them and gives them money. There is nobody as kind-hearted as my uncle. During the depression he made stew and fed the poor people. May be that is why the people went to his restaurant after the depression, and his business boomed. I have never seen a restaurant as busy as his.



This good uncle had a bad nephew, who went to the hospital 2 or 3 days before he died and became his adopted son to inherit his fortune. His widow was angry, and was going to sell all the property and come back to America, but as he had too much property the banks could not buy all, so she is selling small pieces of land at a time.

Q: Where did you get to know Mr. Kanai?

A: Since we were in Elk Grove. He had a poultry business in Elk Grove, and used to come to Sacramento every day to sell eggs. We were together in the camp and at Seabrook. We were separated when we went to Chicago. After he retired, they went back to Japan, but they came back to Sacramento after 2 or 3 years. He found this apartment for us.

Q: Did your husband have a sister?

A: Yes, she had an elder sister.

Q: Did she come to America with him?

A: No, my mother left her with a sewing teacher. A few years later they called her to America.

Q: How old was your husband when he came here?

A: He was 16. He came here right before he graduated from a grammar school. His father came here when he was 2 years old, and he came here when he was 16, so there was no love between father and son.



My husband was a quiet man, and as he was scolded all the time he became more close-mouthed. He did everything his father told him to do without talking back to him. When he came to America as a 16-year-old he was told to cook for the hired hands, and his father scolded him and threw things at him for not doing well. However, my husband never talked back to him as he was brought up to obey his parents. After I went there he suffered being in dilemma between my father-in-law and me. If he was strohg-willed I would not have suffered so much. He could have taken me and left the house, but he couldn't do that. I asked him to send me back to Japan but he didn't let me. I think he was in a difficult position. He just worked without talking back like a fool.

Q: Did you leave everything behind when you left for camp, and did you leave everything when you went to Japan?

A: Yes, we were going back to Chicago, so we left half of our household goods at our niece's and the rest at the home of a couple for whom we acted as go-between. It cost just as much to send them to Chicago as buying them, so we gave them away.

Q: Didn't your back hurt when you picked strawberry?

A: We were young so we didn't think it was hard, but hoeing was hard. We carried a bag which contained 12 baskets and put strawberries in it. My father-in-law who said mean things picked only about 2 baskets while we picked 12 baskets. He didn't work hard himself but worked us hard. He was 56 years old then.



Q: About what time did you used to get up in the morning in those days?

A: At strawberry harvesting time we used to get up around 3 o'clock in the morning to pack the strawberry we picked the day before.

Q: What time did you have breakfast?

A: After we worked a while, around 6 or 7. Then we went to the field.

Q: What about supper?

A: I don't know what time because in those days we worked till it got dark.

Q: Did you cook?

A: Yes, I was not a good cook, but I had to cook. If I ran home my father-in-law used to scold me for running like a child.

Q: About what time did you go to bed?

A: It must have been around 9 or 10 o'clock. Women had extra work of cooking and washing than men. When I washed I had to <sup>boil</sup> water in a big kettle and carry it to the washtub outside. At one time I boiled soap water to wash a bed cover, and while I was carrying the kettle to the washtub outside I tripped over something and spilled the hot water and burned my foot. We didn't have a car, so my husband had to take a streetcar to go and get the medicine. A neighbor told me that miso was good for the burn, so I put it on the burn and wrapped it until my husband came back with the medicine. It was healed without leaving a scar.



Q: How long did it take to heal?

A: I forgot.

Q: Did it take about a month?

A: I don't think it took that long. I could walk in a little while.

Q: Did that happen after the inlaws went home?

A: Yes, after they went home,

Q: About what time did you used to go to bed?

A: Usually around 9:30 p.m. because we got up early.

Q: Did you have to wash dishes and clothes before you went to bed?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you wash every day?

A: No, I washed about every 3 days. I washed a tub full of clothes by hands.

Q: Did you wash at night?

A: Yes, after I finished cleaning the kitchen.

Q: Did you take baths every night?

A: To get a bath ready I had to burn firewood under a big box like a boat.



Q: Was it a Goemon-buro?

A: I don't know what kind it was, but it was a big square box, and I had to burn firewood under it.

Q: Have you ever been hungry?

A: No, I have never been hungry.

Q: There were people who hunted for garbage cans during the depression.

You didn't have to do such thing, didn't you?

A: No, we had enough to eat.

Q: Did you go to Elk Grove in 1929?

A: Yes, it was in 1929 that we went to Elk Grove and bought the land.

Q: It was during the depression, wasn't it?

A: The business was very bad around 1932 and 1933. One year we didn't get any money from the company for strawberry we sent as they said that the strawberries were spoilt and did not pay for the freight. After the strawberry season, my husband went to Lodi to pick grapes. About a week later he came home with a watermelon, and said that there was no work while he stayed there a week and he had to pay for the food. The grape growers had difficulties, too, as they did not get enough money to pay for the freight.



Q: Your husband could summerize his ideas in a short period of time.

Was he used to giving testimonies?

A: He used to do that at church. He helped the church a lot.

Q: Did he work as a treasurer?

A: A little while after he became a Christian, the treasurer resigned. The church did not have money, and the treasurer had to pay money from his own pocket, so nobody wanted to become a treasurer. They pushed the job to my husband, and he werved it for a long time. A few years before he retired he consulted with church members and bought a parsonage for the pastor because he did not like the pastor to be living in a shabbier house than ours. We bought a big house and the pastor lived on the ground floor. We leased upstairs, and from the money we received from the rent we paid back the debts the church owed us. At one time the church owed us thousands of dollars, but by the time we left the debt was down to \$82, so we donated it to the church.

Q: Ho long did he serve as the treasurer?

A: From 1952 to 1962, for about 12 years.

Q: Was Rev. Sakuma the pastor during that time?

A: Yes, he was. They became good friends. There was a mean old man named Mr. Kikuchi who gave the pastor a hard time by contradicting him for everything he said.



T: Tell me about the ice box your husband bought for the pastor.

M: When the pastor lived in the old house he did not have a good ice box, so when we bought the parsonage my husband and his friend Mr. Nkamoto bought a refrigerator and a stove. The mean old man who always complains said that we should have bought them for the church and not for the pastor so that the pastor would leave them here when he left. The pastor was very happy.

Q: Did you come here because you had old friends here?

A: When we were in Chicago we were living in an apartment, but when our grandchild was born we paid \$6,000 as downpayment and bought a small house for our son. It was in famous Hyde Park, but as the number of the Blacks increased it became shabby looking, so the government bought up the old houses and built new tall buildings. At that time the government bought our son's house and paid him a lot of money, so he came to California and bought a 3-bedroom house with a 3-room house attached for \$28,000. He wanted us to live with them, so after we retired 2 or 3 years later we went to San Mateo and lived with them. At the time my son came from Chicago he did not know anything about that area so he bought the house deceived by the real estate man who told him that many Japanese lived there and it is a good district. However, that district gradually became bad and many Japanese moved out, and the Blacks moved in after the Japanese left. My son's family did not like the district so they moved out leaving us living there by ourselves. It became so bad that the Blacks started coming in our backyard jumping over the fence and we did not feel safe. At that time we heard that the Kanais came to Sacramento, so we sold our house for \$30,000 and came here,

*Incomplete ??*